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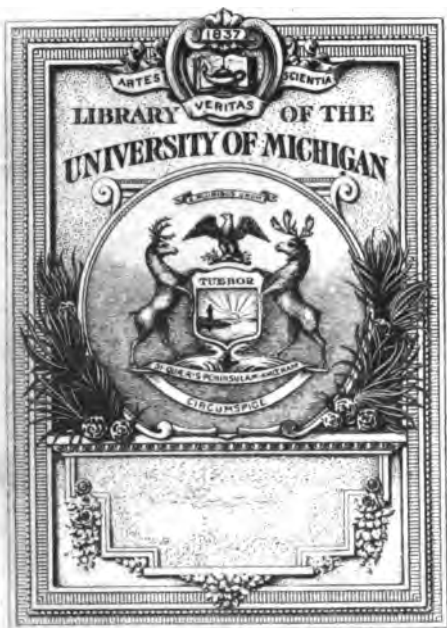
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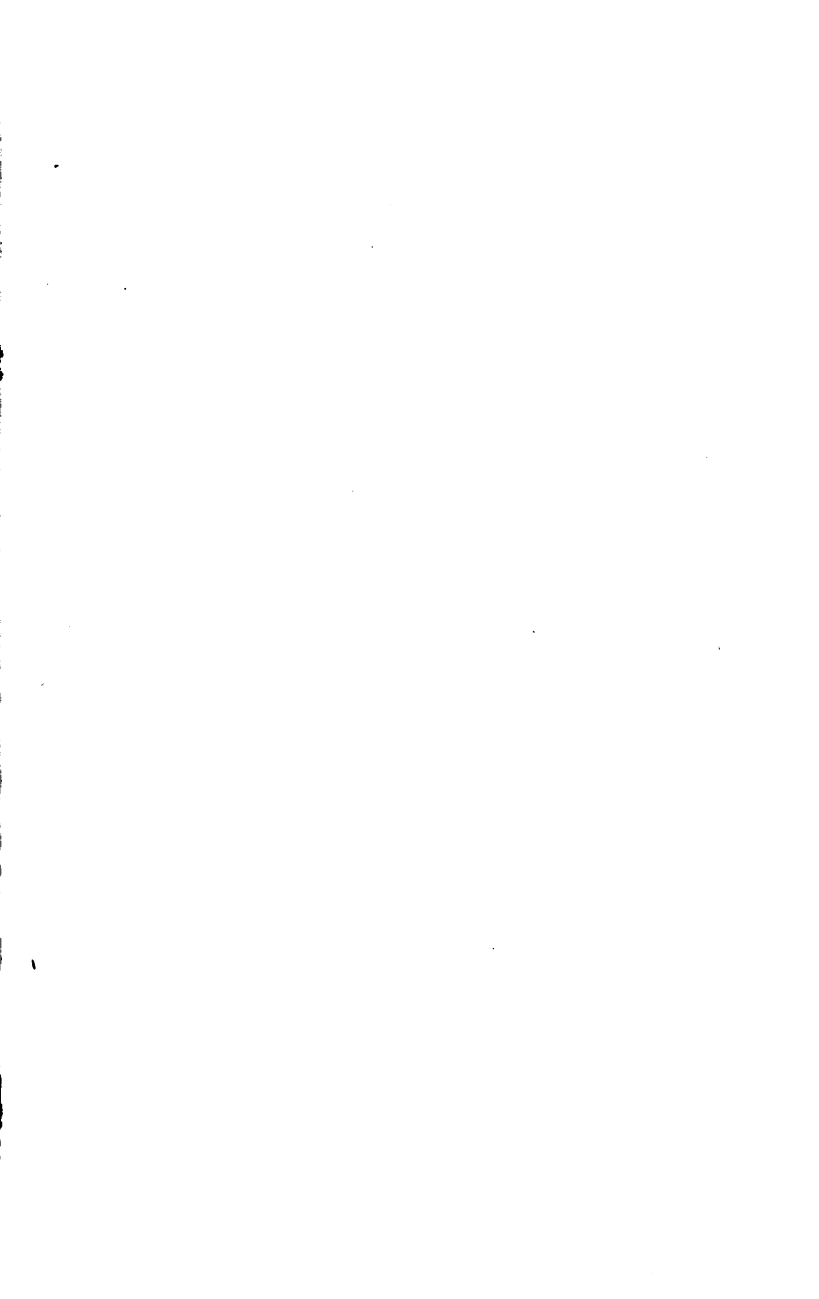


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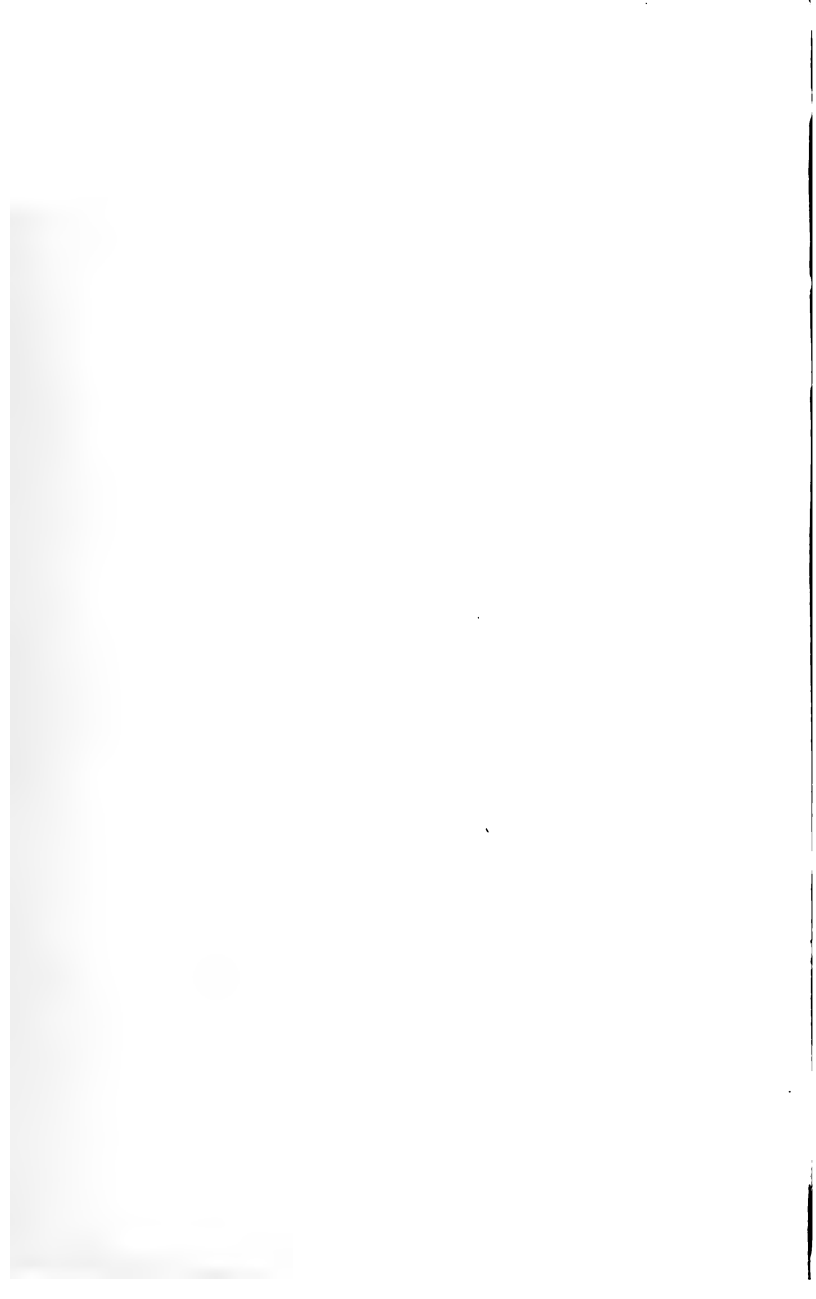
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## ALL HALLOW'S EVE



## ALL HALLOW'S EVE

BASIL

MENZIES

BRIAN

PERCY

BRIAN

TEARFULLY sinks the pallid sun.

MENZIES

Bring in the lamps : Autumn is done.

PERCY

Nay, twilight silvers the flashing drops ;

And a whiter fall is behind.

BRIAN

And the wild east mouths the chimney-tops,

The Pandean pipes of the wind.



**MENZIES**

The dripping ivy drapes the walls ;  
The drenched red creepers flare ;  
And the draggled chestnut plumage falls  
In every park and square.

**PERCY**

Nay, golden garlands strew the way  
For the old triumph of decay.

**BASIL**

And I know, in a living land of spells—  
In an excellent land of rest,  
Where a crimson fount of sunset wells  
Out of the darkling west—

That the poplar, the willow, the scented lime,  
Full-leaved in the shining air

Tarry as if the enchanter time  
Had fixed them deathless there,

In arbours and noble palaces  
A gallant people live  
With every manner of happiness  
The amplest life can give.

PERCY

Where ? where ? In Elfland ?

MENZIES

No ; oh no !

In Elfland is no rest,  
But rumour and stir and endless woe  
Of the unfulfilled behest—  
The doleful yoke of the Elfin folk  
Since first the sun went west.

The cates they eat and the wine they drink,  
Savourless nothings are ;  
The hopes they cherish, the thoughts they think  
Are neither near nor far ;  
And well they know they cannot go  
Even to a desert star :

One planet is all their poor estate,  
Though a million systems roll ;  
They are dogged and worried, early and late,  
As the demons nag a soul,  
By the moon and the sun, for they never can shun  
Time's tyrannous control.

The haughty delicate style they keep  
Only the blind can see ;  
On holynights in the forest deep,  
When they make high revelry

Under the moon, the dancing tune  
Is the wind in a cypress tree.

They burn the elfin midnight oil  
Over their tedious lore ;  
They spin the sand ; and still they toil  
Though their inmost hearts are sore—  
The doleful yoke of the restless folk  
For ever and ever more.

But could you capture the elfin queen  
Who once was Cæsar's prize,  
Daunt and gyve her with glances keen  
Of unimpassioned eyes,  
And hear unstirred her magic word,  
And scorn her tears and sighs,  
Lean would she seem at once, and old ;  
Her rosy mouth decayed ;

Her heavy tresses of living gold,  
All withered in the braid ;  
In your very sight the dew and the light  
Of her eyes would parch and fade ;

And she, the immortal phantom dame,  
Would vanish from your ken ;  
For the fate of the elves is nearly the same  
As the terrible fate of men :  
To love ; to rue : to be and pursue  
A flickering wisp of the fen.

We must play the game with a careless smile,  
Though there's nothing in the hand ;  
We must toil as if it were worth our while  
Spinning our ropes of sand ;  
And laugh and cry, and live and die  
At the waft of an unseen wand.

But the elves, besides the endless woe  
Of the unfulfilled behest,  
Have only a phantom life, and so  
They neither can die nor rest—  
Have no real being at all, and know  
That therefore they never can rest—  
The doleful yoke of the deathless folk  
Since first the sun went west.

## PERCY

Then where is the wonderful land of spells,  
Where a crimson fount of sunset wells,  
And the poplar, the willow, the scented lime  
Tarry, full-leaved, till the winter-time,  
Where endless happiness life can give,  
And only heroic people live?

## BASIL

We know, we know, we spinners of sand !

In the heart of the world is that gracious land ;  
And it never can fade while the sap returns,  
While the sun gives light, and the red blood  
burns.

LAMMAS





## LAMMAS

HERBERT

PERCY

SANDY

NINIAN

PERCY

A HEALTH, in cider, golden, racy, rough—  
The harvest and the harvesters !

SANDY

I drink

In amber spirit that enshrines the heart  
Of an old Lothian summer.

PERCY

Summers old

And Gules of August !—to their memory  
I drink, and to the memory of those  
Who wielded shining sickles. Forth they went,  
The gaunt and ragged heralds of the morn :

Before them spread the sighing leagues of grain ;  
Behind, the tardy sun arose and struck  
All day on men and women obstinate  
Against the stubborn ranks, the golden horde :  
Silent and set, as their long-sworded sires  
Who fought the crashing rollers on the strand  
And stared athwart the ocean wistfully  
Into the moaning storm, the reapers reaped :  
And they grew lean ; and the sun burnt them  
black :  
A sea of living gold poured round their feet  
And rose in crested shocks ; still and anon  
The whetstone shrieked against the curving blade.  
I drink the swarthy harvesters of old !

HERBERT

To them all honour ! But I also drink  
The merry singing wheels that lighten toil.

SANDY

And drive men into cities where they rot !  
Nor do they lighten toil—

NINIAN

A truce to this !  
Let us see things and say them. Why debate ?

SANDY

Debate ? The sergeant-major of the tongue !  
Rather we should invite his discipline.

PERCY

Well said, indeed ! It is this same Debate  
That overmasters armies ; that distils  
From rancorous commotion amity ;  
It is the proof, sifter and alkahest  
Of all opinion, and the ordeal keen  
Of knowledge, reason and intelligence ;

The arbiter of right ; the only source,  
Camp, castle and estate of liberty.  
The sword did never yet perpetuate  
The work it reared—too sharp a trowel, still  
With bloody mortar building on the sand.  
The word alone endures ; but prophecy  
Being now invalid, we exalt Debate.

SANDY

The blare of personal and party aims  
In parliaments and journals seems indeed  
No substitute for Sinai ; but it serves :  
And from the vehement logomachy  
Of interest and cabal, something humane  
At happy intervals proceeds.

NINIAN

How now !

'Something humane at happy intervals !'

A meagre output for your demiurge !

## PERCY

Debate, like every energy divine,

Careless of centuries, elaborates

Events effectual for eternity.

The cavillers, impatient of delay,

Like little boys that violate the earth

To see if seedlings sprout, resent the mode,

When they descry the immaterial

Advancement in a decade ; but we know,

We, ponderers devout of secular years,

How this most tedious Cyclops, this Debate,

Laborious long in darkness and distress,

Hammered and forged the adamantine chains

That shackle tyranny, and now begins

To smelt the ore from which shall yet be  
wrought

A kingly crown for every child of man.

NINIAN

I see no hope in wrangling. Nations pass  
From panic into panic ; all men seem  
Fools or fanatics.

PERCY

Well ? . . . Proceed ; discuss.

NINIAN

Not I ; for now you put me on my guard  
Sometimes when I forget myself I talk  
As though I were persuaded of the truth  
Of some received or unreceived belief ;  
But always afterwards I am ashamed  
Of such lewd lapses into bigotry.

PERCY

Intolerantly tolerant, I say !

SANDY

This is debauchery : defend yourself !

NINIAN

I cannot ; I have tried it many a time,  
And always failed, because the thing I say  
Seems not more just than that which I deny ;  
Nor would I if I could, because to me  
It now appears inept to take a side.  
I know that silence would become me best,  
And I endeavour to be quiet.

SANDY

Oh !



NINIAN

Indeed I do. . . . Now I shall say no more.

HERBERT

Why do you take offence so readily ?

NINIAN

I am not well : I am haunted. Lo, I stand  
On Arthur's Seat. 'The chill and brindled fog  
That plumed the Bass and belted Berwick Law,  
That hung with ghostly tapestry the stones  
Of bleak Tantallon, from the windy Forth,  
Noiseless and dim, speeds by the pier of Leith,  
And by Leith Walk, its dreary channel old,  
To flood the famous city, Edinburgh.  
Then, like the spectre of an inland sea  
By wanton sorcerers troubled and destroyed,  
It foams with whitening surges through the vale,

The fair green hollow over Salisbury Crag ;  
And rises clasping every gentle slope,  
Uneven scar, and fairy-girdled knoll,  
Till with the hungry passion of the dead  
It hugs the high earth, frantic to supply  
Its own lean misty ribs, and live again  
Terrestrial, with the mountain for a soul.  
I stand and watch. The fog begins to ebb ;  
And sunset weaves of all the waning wreaths  
A veil of lace, investing goldenly  
The rock-piled castle—plinth and monolith  
Of ruby deep and dark in soaring groups ;  
The Monument aflame with chrysolite ;  
St Giles's garland-crown studded with gems.  
A bell rings faintly : curled and braided smoke  
O'erhangs the humming Canongate, and flings  
Dusky festoons that wither as they fall  
About the wasted towers of Holyrood.

In front the burnished disc of day descends  
The ample crimson west ; behind, the night  
In silent legions troops into the air.—  
Masses of vision overwhelm me thus :  
I am haunted by the heavens and the earth—  
Darkness and light ; and when I am addressed  
I answer from the point, or petulantly,  
Or say the opposite of what I would,  
And am most awkward, helpless, and forlorn.  
Wherefore I shun the company of men,  
Not fearing them, but fearful of myself ;  
Surely to strive to please and still to fail  
Is to be wretched in the last degree.

SANDY

Then do not strive to please : condemn contempt,  
And trust yourself.

## NINIAN

But I mistrust myself :

A word, a glance, a cloud, a beam of light,

A perfume from its orbit shakes my soul.

## SANDY

This weakness comes because you look without.

## NINIAN

I look without : you look within : what then ?

You are possessed ; I, obsessed : that is all.

I am besieged by things that I have seen :

Followed and watched by rivers ; snared and held

In labyrinthine woods and tangled meads ;

Hemmed in by mountains ; waylaid by the sun ;

Environed and beset by moon and stars ;

Whispered by winds and summoned by the sea.

HERBERT

What do you note now ?

NINIAN

By a Kentish road,  
Across the down where poles in ricks repose,  
Delivered from the burden of the bines,  
And golden apples on their twisted boughs  
Illumine ancient orchards, descend,  
Watching and wondering to the Medway's bank.  
The alder and the hazel dip their leaves ;  
The grass-green willow shakes; the spiny thorn,  
Embossed and lustrous with its load of haws,  
Shines in the water like a burning bush;  
And broad and deep, muttering outlandish  
things,  
The heavy river rolls its umber flood.

Convolvuluses overhang the brink,  
Pallid or watchet-hued, and still as bells  
That in a trance imagine tuneful chimes  
Of virtue to enchant a moonlit mere.  
On river lawns with emerald velvet spread  
The ewes sedately browse the three-piled nap.  
A distant clang of shouts and laughter rings  
Across the valley from the gleaming tents  
Of sunburnt hoppers at their evening meal ;  
And fainter voices from the roadside inn  
Echo about the air, and dwell and die.  
Crowned by the yellow oasthouse from whose  
    cowl  
Banners and scarfs of fleecy smoke hang out,  
And busked with serried, tawny-clustered vines,  
Far-reaching slopes lean up along the sky.  
The drowsy wind touches a fitful stop ;  
The Medway mutters dreaming as it rolls ;

In bronzing brakes and thickets deeply choired  
Autumnal tokens birds at leisure pipe ;  
While the sun, shut within a donjon high  
Of massive cloud, through secret loopholes flings  
His moted beams that quiver visibly  
Broadcast ; or seem ethereal lances, stacked  
By the celestial watchmen who patrol  
The world at night, and on their silent rounds  
Move to the ghostly music of the spheres.

HERBERT

And whence comes this obsession ?

NINIAN

Hark ! Behold !

The floor is flooded with the tide. I lounge  
Upon a shingle bolster. Dimly seen  
Beyond the weathergleam a pennon'd mast,  
A drift of smoke, hover and disappear ;

And in the midst dark sails of mackerel boats  
Over a reach of water, brown as tan,  
Dance, deftly tripping the uneven waves.  
Nearer, a yellow width unwinds ; between,  
A point of emerald glows, and suddenly  
Shoots out and burns its way towards the west—  
A spark in tinder, then a stripe of fire,  
And last a sheet of phosphorescent green  
Fuming with white waves. Listen ! at my feet  
The uplifted shuddering rollers headlong fall,  
And jangle on the beach as the surf breaks  
In silver chains and shekels ; while the wind  
Out of the southwest sings across the deep.  
Straightway a new sky makes another sea.  
Occultly gifted, light upon the waves  
Juggles with hidden beams behind a cloud  
Bright but impenetrable. Near the shore  
A vein of saffron shines ; beyond, a band



Of olive hue blends with a sapphire zone ;  
Further away, wine-coloured water heaves  
Against a high sea-wall of swarthy fog.  
Is it the sea that gleams in merging breadths  
Of colour dark and wet ? Or do the powers,  
That decorate the quarters of the world,  
In some vast crucible dissolve and fuse  
Virginal mines of ruby, malachite,  
Jacinth and chrysoprase to pave the floor  
Of ocean rough with wrecks and skeletons ?  
Nature is now about some mystery !  
But while I watch, ere I can mark the change,  
The passionate sun flames through the shrivelled  
cloud,  
And all the crisp and curling water wakes,  
Blue as the naked sky that bathes in it.

HERBERT

How does it happen you are so beset ?

## NINIAN

I shall attempt to tell you honestly.  
It was engraven deeply on my mind  
In daily lessons from my infancy  
Until I left my father's house, that not  
Ability and knowledge, beauty and strength,  
But goodness only can avail. I watched,  
And thought I understood that beauty, strength  
And knowledge ought to reign, they being indeed  
The trinity of goodness ; but I claimed  
That this should be revealed to me, that I  
Should be directly warned by God Himself  
In the old fashion. Strange it seems ; and yet  
It was not very strange. Each morn and eve,  
Year after year, I heard the prophets read,  
Heard strong believing prayer : the atmosphere  
Was not allied more nearly to my breath

Than to my mind the thought of God—no dream  
Of deity ; a living, active God.

On hill-tops, by the sea, in storm, in calm  
I cried to Him to speak to me ; with tears  
Solicited a sign. Sleepless and pale  
I wandered like a ghost, and day and night  
Waited upon a message from on high.  
Sunset and sunrise came ; the seasons past ;  
The years went slowly by ; but still to me  
The universe was dumb. Books helped me not,  
Except for pleasure or to gain command  
Of words : I would have God's own voice or none  
At last I ceased to hope and found content  
In roaming through the land. The magic sun  
Drew pictures on my sight. Wondering I  
watched ;  
Nor could the secular fairy ever change  
My wonder into curiosity.

All my emotion and imagining  
Were of the finest tissue that is woven  
From sense and thought. No well-thumbed  
page appeared

In the hard book of memory when I woke :  
Amazed I trembled newly into life :  
I seemed to be created every morn.  
A golden trumpet pealed along the sky :  
The sun arose ; the whole earth rushed upon me.  
Sometimes the tree that stroked my window-pane  
Was more than I could grasp ; sometimes my  
thought

Absorbed the universe, which fell away  
And dwindled from my ken, as if my mind  
Had been the roomy continent of space.—  
My way of life led me to London town,  
And difficulties—which I overcame,  
Equipped with patience and necessity.

Then suddenly before my thoughts might leap  
Resurgent from the living tomb of care  
And dip their wings in dawn, about me clung  
The slimy folds of sin : its nether coils  
Are hidden in the sepulchre of time,  
The glutted past ; the pallid future strains  
In travail with its fiery eyes and fangs :  
I peer from out the slippery middle wreaths  
And see blurred visions of the world, or watch  
The flashing scenes that haunt my memory.  
When heedfully I viewed my latter days—  
Considering for the first time in my life  
The naked facts of my affairs and me—  
I found that underneath indifference  
To every aim saving a livelihood  
And leisure to enjoy nature and art,  
My source of strength, though never to myself  
Confessed before, had been the lurking thought

That poison, or a bullet, or the waves  
Could stop the unendurable ecstasy  
Of pain or pleasure, at whichever pole  
Of passion I determined to forsake  
The orb of life, on my acceptance thrust  
In ignorance and disregard of me,  
My temperament and fitness for the gift ;  
But now that refuge of despair is shut,  
For other lives have twined themselves with  
mine.

And yet. . . . How shall I seize you with due  
dread

Of the offensive tide that stifles me,  
The worm obscene in whose close coils I  
writhe ? . . .

Now I conceive it clearly ; you shall mark  
Fate's way with me ! A tedious decade hence  
My son shall come and pitifully cry,

II

C

' Father, why am I weak, outclassed, outcast ?

' I cannot do the things that others do ;

' I take no place in work or play ; my brains

' Are unelastic : something in my head

' Snaps when I fain would study ; visions rise

' Unsummoned ; phantom tongues mumble  
strange news ;

' And when I would contend in games, my bones

' Grow pithless, and my sinews shrink ; my  
heart !—

' Who wore it out with sensual drudgery

' Before it came to me ? what warped its valves ?

' It has been used : my heart is secondhand !

' Why had I not the force to be born great,

' Fit for a splendid stage, a noble part,

' A crisis in the world ? Why must I think

' Such things at seventeen ? Why think at all

' When love should lap me in a constant dream ?

' I have no faith instinctive in myself ;  
' No reservoir profound of energy ;  
' No fathomless resource ; no central fire ;  
' No passionate aroma in my blood  
' Filling the world with fragrance where I come ;  
' No rapt imagination to transmute  
' All pallor into glory. Life you gave :  
' Where is my birthright, sir, beauty and  
strength ? '

What can I say to him ?

HERBERT

PERCY

SANDY

The truth !

NINIAN

This then :—

' My son, your ancestors supplanted you :  
' You are my child ; hence are your teeth on  
edge.



' Our blood is stale; the tree from which we  
spring

' Fades at the top. Two of our family

' Have died insane in my time : one I saw

' Go mad. The sounds and sights that visit you

' Attend me too, foretellers of our doom.

' The ultimate iniquity is mine ;

' But from a root in distant ages sunk

' The loathsome filaments entangle you.

' And I impeach the smooth conniving world,

' The bland accomplice that has made and makes

' A merit of defect, a cult of woe,

' Sowing exhausted land with seed that's foul,

' To harvest tares of madness, impotence,

' Uncomeliness in wasteful granaries—

' I mean asylums, prisons, hospitals.

' If only nineteen hundred years ago

' A gospel of the pride of life had rung

' Our doleful era in ; if the device  
' In nature's choice of beauty and of strength  
' Had then been shown to man, how had the  
    world  
' Approved the excellent expedient,  
' With voluntary euthanasia  
' Weeded humanity at once, and made  
' A race of heroes in a golden age ! . . .  
' This helps not. All the blame is mine, my  
    son,  
' Who never should have been ' . . . It palsies  
    me ;

I cannot comfort him ; he stands and stares  
Defeated ere he was begot.—Behold  
The ancient snake that pinions me ! Like one  
Chained to a column in a turbid stream,  
About my ears a sluggish billow flaps,  
And chokes and daubs me with its ropy wash.

## SANDY

Escape ! I know the manner ! Live at speed ;  
And call your least caprice the law of God ;  
Disdain the shows of things, and every love  
Whose stamen is not hate ; self-centred stand ;  
Accept no second thought ; in every throb  
Your heart gives, every murmur of your mind,  
Listen devoutly to the trump of doom.  
You are your birthright ; let it serve you well :  
Be your own star, for strength is from within,  
And one against the world will always win !

## NINIAN

I cannot act. The subtle coils grow tense,  
And crush my limbs, my heart, my throat, my  
head.

I am the sufferer, the endurer, I.  
Yet God who gives no presage hitherto,

Haply intends hereafter to be heard.  
I am not thinking solely of myself,  
But of the groaning cataract of life,  
The ruddy stream that leaps importunate  
Out of the night, and in a moment vaults  
The immediate treacherous precipice of time,  
Splashing the stars, downward into the night.  
Meanwhile for me no lulling opiate,  
No dream, no mystic solvent: I must watch  
Hopeless, unhelped, till I go mad or die.

HERBERT

But you have hope and help.

NINIAN

I? Show me them!

HERBERT

You went forth seeking God and found the world

The sounds and sights that haunt, and help and  
please.

The canopy and state of day and night ;  
The pageant of the year ; the changing moods,  
The loyal constancy and testament  
Of Nature—her asides, her hints, and smiles,  
Her clear ideas of repose and toil,  
Her covenant and noble ministry  
Of light and darkness, and of life and death,  
Are the true salve for your distempered mind.  
Blame not yourself too much ; admit no fear  
Of madness with the sunrise in your blood ;  
And hold your own intelligence in awe  
As the most high : there is no other God—  
No God at all ; yet God is in the womb—  
A living God, no mystic deity.  
With idols in its infancy the world  
Deceived itself as maidens do with dolls,

And as it grew pretended and believed  
That what it should bring forth already reigned.  
Now is its hour come, but it only knows  
The sick dismay and anguish, ignorant  
Of birth-pangs and an offspring more divine  
Than man has yet imagined. I have woes,  
As you and all men have in their degree;  
So let us think we are the tortured nerves  
Of Being in travail with a higher type.  
I know that I shall crumble back to dust,  
And cease for evermore from sense and thought,  
But this contents me well in my distress :—  
I, being human, touch the highest reach  
Attained by matter, and within me feel  
The motion of a loftier than I :  
Out of the beast came man; from man comes  
God.  
Deepest delight is in the certainty

That to the all pervading element  
Wherein the universe disports a while,  
Ethereal oblivion, my deeds  
And I eternally belong.

## NINIAN

Yes. . . See,  
They throng the room!—no spectres, but them-  
selves :

Sibilant depths of darkness; avenues  
Of latticed light; ambrosial, pine-strewn glades;  
Ravines and waterfalls; the grass-green turf,  
Where primroses by secret alchemy  
Distil from buried treasure golden leaves,  
And where forget-me-nots above the tombs  
Of snow-drops hang their candelabra, trimmed  
With azure light—turquoise by magic roots  
Drawn from the bowels of the earth and changed

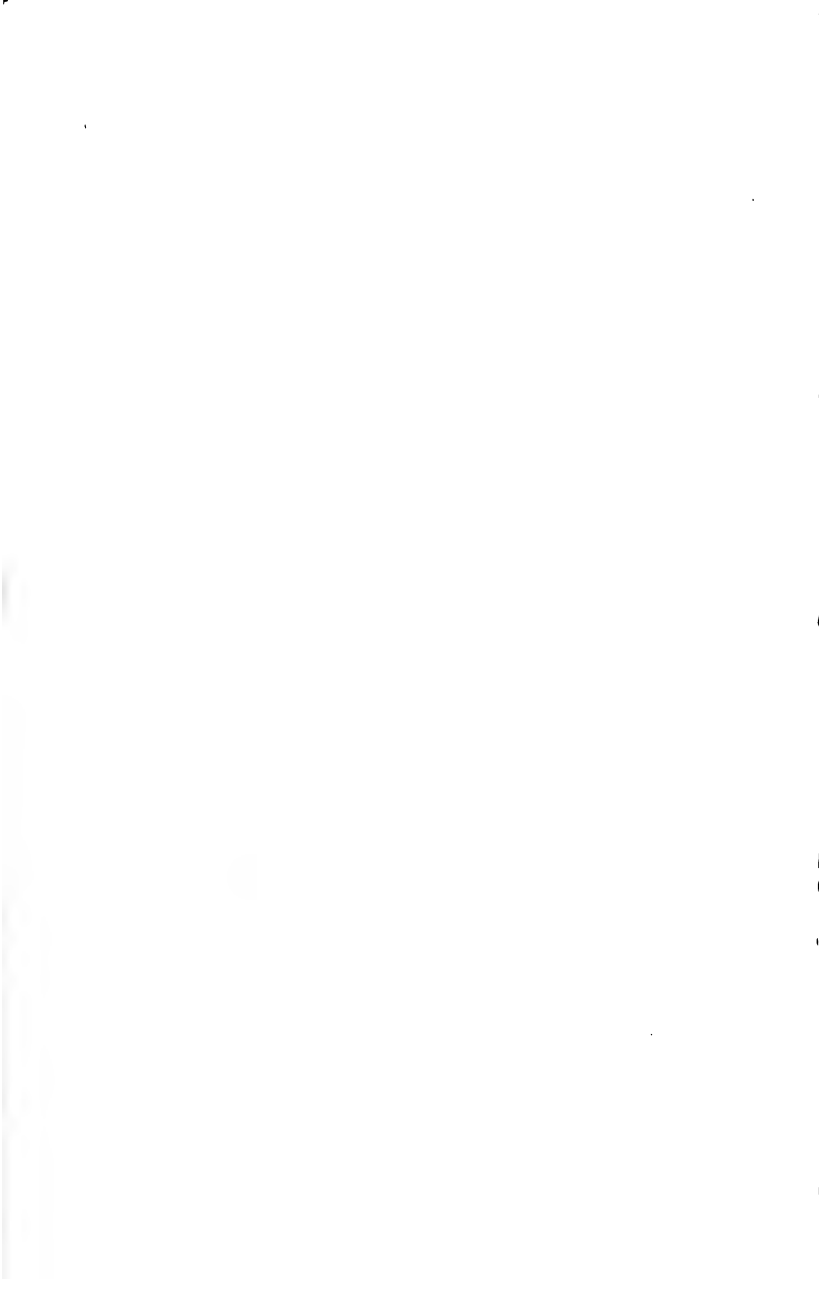
To living flame; roses, laburnum, lilac;  
Sunrise and sunset like a glowing vice  
Bloodstained that grips the world; the restless  
moon

Swung low to light us; clouds; the limpid sky;  
The bourdon of the great ground-bee, athwart  
A lonely hill-side, vibrant on the air,  
And subtler than the scent of violets;  
Sonorous winds, storm, thunder, and the sea.





## MIDSUMMER DAY



## MIDSUMMER DAY

BASIL

SANDY

HERBERT

SANDY

I CANNOT write, I cannot think ;

'Tis half delight and half distress :

My memory stumbles on the brink

Of some unfathomed happiness—

Of some old happiness divine.

What haunting scent, what haunting note,

What word, or what melodious line,

Sends my heart throbbing to my throat ?

## BASIL

What ? thrilled with happiness to-day,  
The longest day in all the year,  
Which we must spend in making hay  
By thrashing straw in Fleet Street here !

What scent ? what sound ? The odour stale  
Of watered streets ; the bruit loud  
Of hoof and wheel on road and rail,  
The rush and trample of the crowd !

## HERBERT

Humming the song of many a lark,  
Out of the sea, across the shires,  
The west wind blows about the park,  
And faintly stirs the Fleet Street wires.

Perhaps it sows the happy seed  
That blossoms in your memory ;

Certain of many a western mead,  
And hill and stream it speaks to me.

With rosy showers of apple-bloom  
The orchard sward is mantled deep ;  
Shaded in some sequestered coombe  
The red deer in the Quantocks sleep.

## BASIL

Go on : of rustic visions tell  
Till I forget the wilderness  
Of sooty brick, the dusty smell,  
The jangle of the printing-press.

## HERBERT

I hear the woodman's measured stroke ;  
I see the amber streamlet glide—  
Above, the green gold of the oak  
Fledges the gorge on either side.

A thatched roof shines athwart the gloom  
Of the high moorland's darksome ground ;  
Far off the surging rollers boom,  
And fill the shadowy wood with sound

## BASIL

You have pronounced the magic sign !  
The city with its thousand years,  
Like some embodied mood of mine  
Uncouth, prodigious, disappears.

I stand upon a lowly bridge,  
Moss-grown beside the old Essex home ;  
Over the distant purple ridge  
The clouds arise in sultry foam ;

In many a cluster, wreath and chain  
A silvery vapour hangs on high,

And snowy scarfs of silken grain

Bedeck the blue slopes of the sky ;

The wandering water sighs and calls,

And breaks into a chant that rings

Beneath the vaulted bridge, then falls

And under heaven softly sings ;

A light wind lingers here and there,

And whispers in an unknown tongue

The passionate secrets of the air,

That never may by men be sung :

Low, low, it whispers ; stays, and goes ;

It comes again ; again takes flight ;

And like a subtle presence grows

And almost gathers into sight.



## SANDY

The wind that stirs the Fleet Street wires,  
And roams and quests about the Park,  
That wanders all across the shires,  
Humming the song of many a lark—

The wind—it is the wind, whose breath,  
Perfumed with roses, wakes in me  
From shrouded slumbers deep as death  
A yet unfaded memory.

## BASIL

About Midsummer, every hour  
Ten thousand rosebuds opening blush ,  
The land is all one rosy bower,  
And rosy odours haunt and flush

The winds of heaven up and down :

On the top-gallant of the air

The lark, the pressman in the town

Breathe only rosy incense rare.

SANDY

And I, enchanted by the rose,

Remember when I first began

To know what in its bosom glows

Exhaling scent ambrosian.

A child, at home in streets and quays,

The city tumult in my brain,

I only knew of tarnished trees,

And skies corroding vapours stain.

One summer—Time upon my head

Had showered the curls of years eleven—

Me, for a month, good fortune led

Where trees are green and hills kiss heaven.

By glen and mountain, moor and lawn,

Burn-side and sheep-path, day and night,

I wandered, a belated faun,

All sense, all wonder, all delight.

And once at eve I climbed a hill,

Burning to see the sun appear,

And watched the jewelled darkness fill

With lamps and clustered tapers clear.

At last the strongest stars were spent;

A glimmering shadow overcame

The swarthy-purple firmament,

And throbbed and kindled into flame ;

The pallid day, the trembling day  
Put on her saffron wedding-dress,  
And watched her bridegroom far away  
Soar through the starry wilderness.

I clasped my hands and closed my eyes,  
And tears relieved my ecstasy :  
I dared not watch the sun arise ;  
Nor knew what magic daunted me :

And yet the roses seemed to tell  
More than the morn, had I but known  
The meaning of the fragrant smell  
That bound me with a subtle zone.

But in the gloaming when we played  
At hide-and-seek, and I with her

Behind a rose-bush hid, afraid

To meet her gaze, to breathe, or stir,

The dungeon of my sense was riven,

The beauty of the world laid bare,

A great wind caught me up to heaven

Upon a cloud of golden hair ;

And mouth touched mouth ; and love was born ;

And when our wondering vision blent,

We found the meaning of the morn,

The meaning of the rose's scent.

Ah me ! ah me ! since then ! since then !

#### HERBERT

Nay, nay ; let self-reproaches be !

Now that this thought is throned again,

Be zealous for its sovereignty.

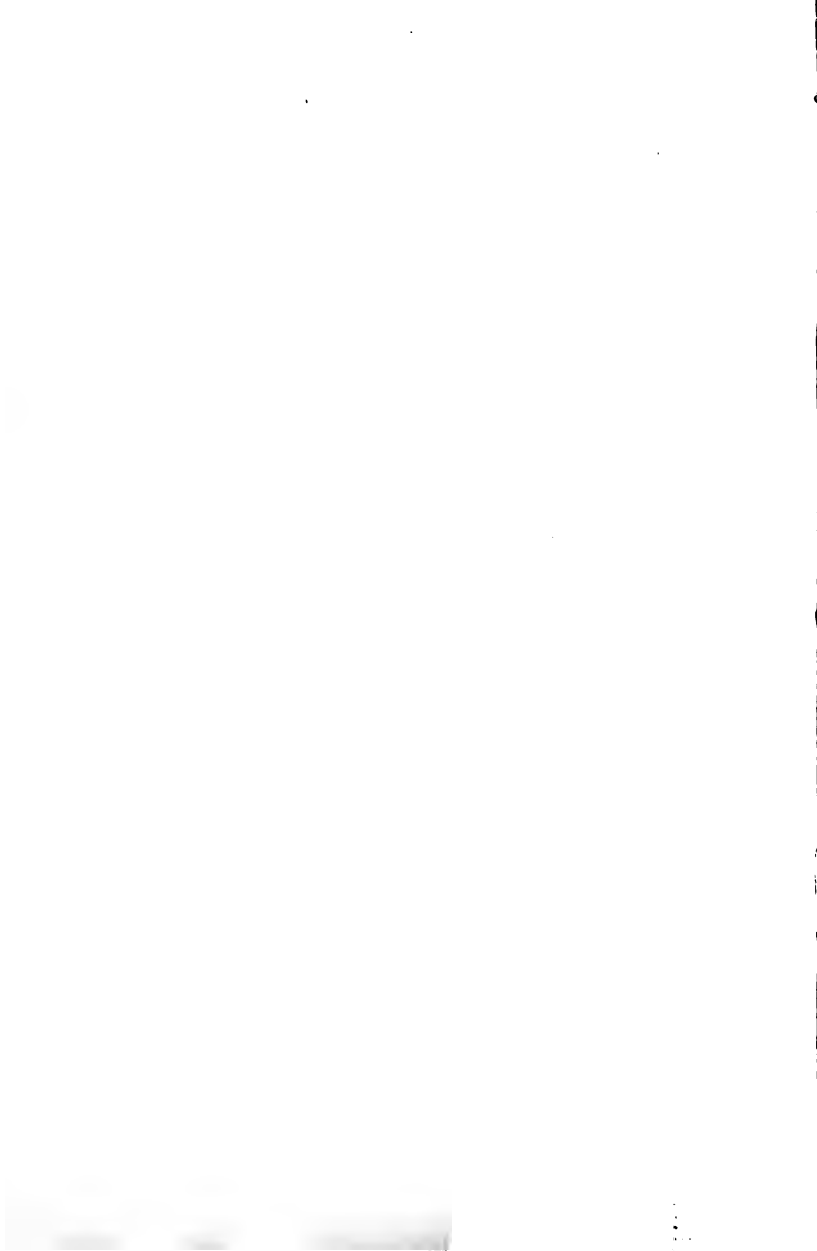
**BASIL**

And brave, great Nature must be thanked ;

And we must worship on our knees,

And hold for ever sacro-sanct

Such dewy memories as these.



**MAYDAY**





## MAYDAY

BRIAN

MENZIES

BRIAN

LATE—you are late. And where have you been?

MENZIES

I have been in the woods and the lanes.

BRIAN

And what have you heard, and what have you  
seen,

And what in your fancy reigns?

MENZIES

I have heard the ring-dove coo,

And the cuckoo toll his bell ;  
I have seen the shrieking jay flash blue  
Athwart a wooded dell.

I have heard the chattering streamlet run  
In haste to reach the sea ;  
I have watched the golden bee,  
Cupid and Hymen in one,  
Morn, noon, and afternoon,  
Fulfil the tingling hours  
With the murmuring sound of his bridal tune  
As he married the waiting flowers.

The long, long hedgerows white with May  
Bordered the rustling lanes ;  
And a fragrant wind blew all the day.

BRIAN

But what in your fancy reigns ?



## MENZIES

There reigned, and is regnant still,  
A memory, long forgot,  
Of a lowland town, a lowland hill,  
And a lowland woman's lot.

She shed her tears, and dreamed her dreams,  
And wore her sad wan smiles,  
Where a wide water winds and gleams  
Among its links and isles.

Rock-perched a royal borough towers  
High over the highest trees,  
With crumbling walls and faded bowers  
And mouldering palaces.

Near by a hill its dark crest lifts  
Sheer from the river bank,

And cloudy shadow broods and shifts  
About its russet flank.

The land is stained with purple dyes  
Of high-romantic scenes;  
The air still quivers with the sighs  
Of tragic kings and queens ;

The very ploughman holds his plough  
As proudly as a lance ;  
The milkmaid bears a dreamy brow,  
Inheriting romance.

Even in my father's time a crew  
Of lads and lasses gay  
Would dip their faces in the dew  
Upon the first of May.

This joyful mood might not withstand  
The age's growing care,  
When railways hacked and scored the land,  
And wires engraved the air.

One woman only, all forlorn,  
While twenty summers flew,  
Still climbed the hill each May-day morn  
Her beauty to renew !

What love, what loss, what hope was hers  
No man or maid could tell,  
But all the loyal lowlanders  
Esteemed her custom well.

Dressed in a hat with broken plume,  
A cape, and worn black frock,  
Before the dawn she left her room,  
And climbed by scar and rock.

And so to-day by lane and burn,  
By scented hedge and shaw,  
At many a pause and sudden turn  
Her wistful face I saw.

And once as in a waking dream  
The whole fair lowland shone—  
The palaced rock, the hill, the stream,  
The softly coming dawn :

And she with sobs and murmured cries  
To earth's green bosom laid  
Her withered cheek, while from her eyes  
Hot dew on cold dew strayed.

BRIAN

What was her end ?

MENZIES

Oh, exquisite !

Winter and Spring she lay  
Bedridden in a palsy fit ;  
But on the first of May,

When the lark waked the sun, she too  
Arose, and in a trance  
Went forth to bathe her face in dew,  
The martyr of romance.

They found her on the green hill-side  
At home, and sleeping fast  
Her endless sleep, Death's pallid bride,  
Most beautiful at last.

*(Singing within.)*

*' Remember us poor Mayers all,*

*' And thus we do begin*

*' To lead our lives in righteousness,*

*' Or else we die in sin.*



*' I have been rambling all this night,  
' And almost all this day,  
' And now returned back again  
' I bring you a branch of May.'*

BRIAN

An antique minstrel ! Hark !

MENZIES

It is Basil : I know his note.

*(Enter BASIL, carrying a branch of hawthorn  
blossom.)*

MENZIES

Have you been where the night-jar haunts the  
dark

In outland ways remote ?

BASIL

I have been with the nightingale :  
I have learned his song so sweet :  
I sang it aloud by wood and dale,  
And under my breath in the street.  
If the words would only flow—

MENZIES

Oh, sing it now !

BASIL

No, no !

But it went like this, I think :—

‘ Where the purple hyacinths grew,  
‘ And the champions white and pink,  
‘ The jewelled butterflies flew  
‘ From jewelled cups to drink ;

' And some were violet-eyed,  
' Some blue, some rosy-red,  
' Gold-plumed, or damask-dyed,  
' Earth-born and heaven-bred ;  
' And every chalice drooped and sighed  
' When the splendid revellers fled ;  
' But never a flower its cup denied  
' Though the wine of life was shed.

' The lark from the top of heaven raved  
' Of the sunshine sweet and old ;  
' And the whispering branches dipped and  
laved  
' In the light; and waste and wold  
' Took heart and shone; and the buttercups  
paved  
' The emerald meads with gold.

' Now in the forest is night;  
' The flowers have gone to sleep;  
' But the stars have opened their eyes of light  
' Under the brows of heaven deep;  
' And gentle shadows cross my sight,  
' And murmurs rustle and creep;  
' And the very darkness is fresh and bright  
' With the tears the sweet dew's weep.

' The wind steals down the lawns  
' With a whisper of ecstasy,  
' Of moonlit nights and rosy dawns,  
' And a nest in a hawthorn tree,  
' Of the little mate for whom I wait,  
' Flying across the sea,  
' Through storm and night as sure as fate,  
' Swift-winged with love for me.'

## MENZIES

And so you brought home the May  
With the nightingale's song in your ears.

## BASIL

And sad eyes flashed for a moment gay,  
Or welled with happy tears,  
When they saw my branch and remembered the  
day,  
And forgot the tedious years.  
And I thought as I tuned my rhyme,  
And waved the branch in my hand,  
Of the famous olden time  
When a Maypole stood in the Strand.

## BRIAN

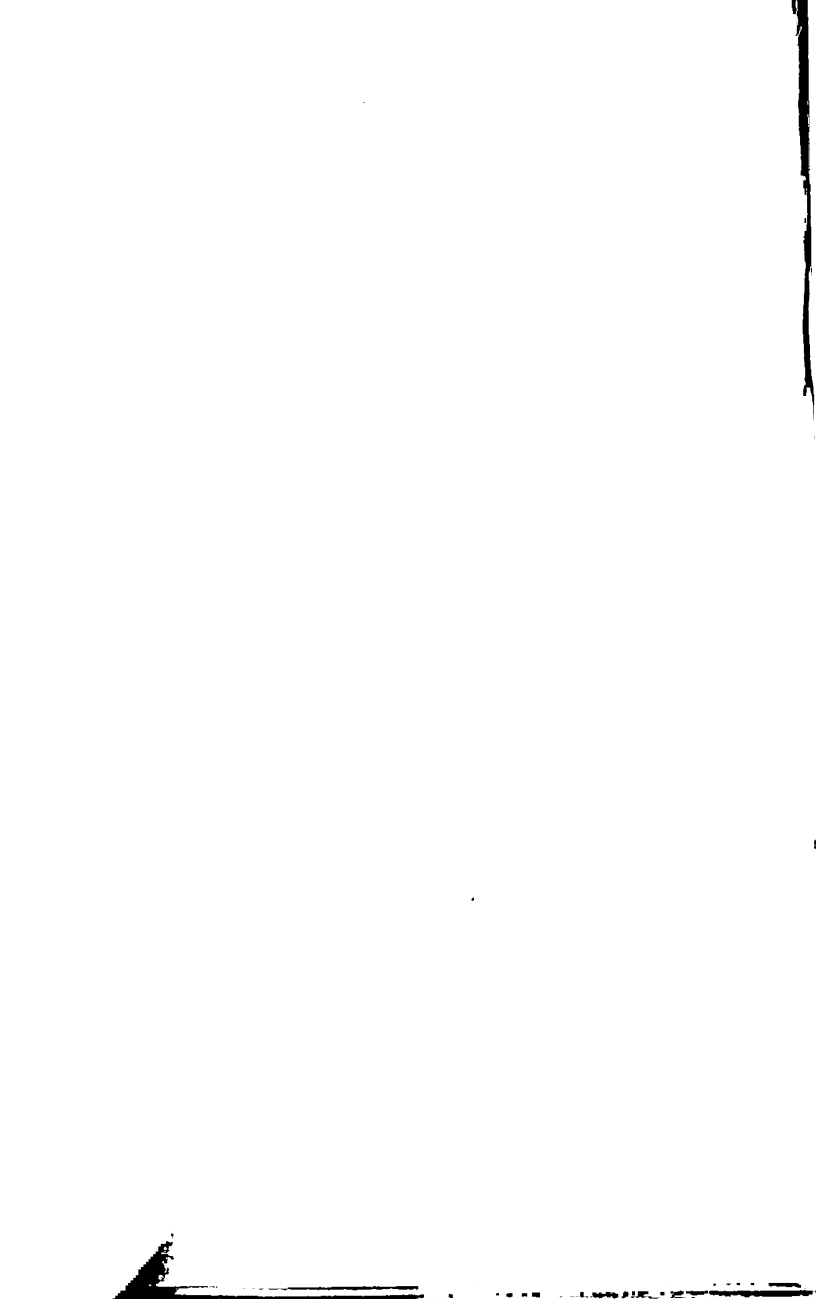
Let the Golden Days return !

**MENZIES**

**And let the May-Queen reign !**

**BASIL**

**When smokeless fires burn,  
And London is born again !**



# **ST GEORGE'S DAY**





## ST GEORGE'S DAY

BASIL MENZIES PERCY BRIAN HERBERT SANDY

### HERBERT

I hear the lark and linnet sing ;  
I hear the whitethroat's alto ring.

### MENZIES

I hear the idle workman sigh ;  
I hear his hungry children cry.

### SANDY

Still sad and brooding over ill :  
Why listen to discordant tones ?

## HERBERT

We dream, we sing, we drive the quill  
To keep the flesh upon our bones.  
Therefore what trade have we with wrongs,  
With ways and woes that spoil our songs?

## MENZIES

None, none! Alas, there lies the sting!  
We see, we feel, but cannot aid;  
We hide our foolish heads and sing:  
We live, we die; and all is said.

## HERBERT

To wonder-worlds of old romance  
Our aching thoughts for solace run.

## BRIAN

And some have stolen fire from France.

**SANDY**

And some adore the Midnight sun.

**MENZIES**

I, too, for light the world explore,  
And trembling, tread where angels trod ;  
Devout at every shrine adore,  
And follow after each new god.  
But by the altar everywhere  
I find the money-changer's stall ;  
And littering every temple-stair  
The sick and sore like maggots crawl.

**BASIL**

Your talk is vain ; your voice is hoarse.

**MENZIES**

I would they were as hoarse and vain

As their wide-weltering spring and source  
Of helpless woe, of wrath insane.

HERBERT

Why will you hug the coast of Hell ?

BRIAN

Why antedate the Judgment Day ?

MENZIES

Nay, flout me not ; you know me well.

BASIL

Right, comrade ! Give your fancy way.

MENZIES

I cannot see the stars and flowers,  
Nor hear the lark's soprano ring,  
Because a ruddy darkness lowers

For ever, and the tempests sing.  
I see the strong coerce the weak,  
And labour overwrought rebel ;  
I hear the useless treadmill creak,  
The prisoner, cursing in his cell ;  
I see the loafer-burnished wall ;  
I hear the rotting match-girl whine ;  
I see the unslept switchman fall ;  
I hear the explosion in the mine ;  
I see along the heedless street  
The sandwichmen trudge through the mire ;  
I hear the tired quick tripping feet  
Of sad, gay girls who ply for hire.

**BASIL**

To brood on feeble woe at length  
Must drive the sanest thinker mad ;  
Consider rather weal and strength.

## MENZIES

On what foundations do they stand ?  
I mark the sable ironclad  
In every sea ; in every land,  
An army, idling on the chain  
Of rusty peace that chafes and frets  
Its seven-leagued limbs, and bristled mane  
Of glittering bayonets ;  
The glowing blast, the fire-shot smoke  
Where guns are forged and armour-plate ;  
The mammoth hammer's pounding stroke ;  
The din of our dread iron date.  
And always divers undertones  
Within the roaring tempest throb—  
The chink of gold, the labourer's groans,  
The infant's wail, the woman's sob.  
Hoarsely they beg of Fate to give

A little lightening of their woe,  
A little time to love, to live,  
A little time to think and know.  
I see where from the slums may rise  
Some unexpected dreadful dawn—  
The gleam of steeled and scowling eyes,  
A flash of women's faces wan !

BASIL

This is St George's Day.

MENZIES

St George? A wretched thief I vow.

HERBERT

Nay, Menzies, you should rather say,  
St George for Merry England, now !



## SANDY

That surely is a phantom cry,  
Hollow and vain for many years.

## MENZIES

I hear the idle workmen sigh ;  
I hear the drip of women's tears.

## HERBERT

I hear the lofty lark,  
The lowly nightingale

## BASIL

The Present is a dungeon dark  
Of social problems. Break the gaol !  
Get out into the splendid Past  
Or bid the splendid Future hail.

**MENZIES**

Nor then, nor now, nor first, nor last,  
I know. The slave of ruthless Law,  
To me Time seems a dungeon vast  
Where Life lies rotting in the straw.

**BASIL**

I care not for your images  
Of Life and Law. I want to sing  
Of England and of Englishmen  
Who made our country what it is.

**HERBERT**

And I to praise the English Spring.

**PERCY**

St George for Merry England, then !

**MENZIES**

There is no England now, I fear.

BASIL

No England, say you, and since when ?

MENZIES

Cockney and Celt and Scot are here,  
And Democrats and 'ans' and 'ists'  
In clubs and cliques and divers lists ;  
But now we have no Englishmen.

BASIL

You utter what you never felt,  
I know. By bog and mount and fen,  
No Saxon, Norman, Scot, or Celt  
I find, but only Englishmen.

HERBERT

In all our hedges roses bud.

BASIL

And thought and speech are more than blood.

HERBERT

Away with spleen, and let us sing  
The praises of the English Spring !

BASIL

In weeds of gold and purple hues  
Glad April bursts with piping news  
Of swifts and swallows come again,  
And of the tender pensive strain  
The bulfinch sings from bush to bush.

PERCY

And oh ! the blackbird and the thrush  
Interpret as no master may  
The meaning of the night and day.

## SANDY

They catch the whispers of the breeze  
And weave them into melodies.

## BRIAN

They utter for the hours that pass  
The purpose of their moments bright.

## BASIL

They speak the passion of the grass,  
That grows so stoutly day and night.

## HERBERT

St George for merry England then !  
For we are all good Englishmen !

## PERCY

We stand as our forefathers stood  
For Liberty's and Conscience' sake.

HERBERT

We are the sons of Robin Hood,  
The sons of Hereward the Wake.

PERCY

The sons of yeomen, English-fed,  
Ready to feast or drink or fight.

HERBERT

The sons of kings—of Hal and Ned,  
Who kept their island right and tight.

PERCY

The sons of Cromwell's Ironsides,  
Who knew no king but God above.

BASIL

We are the sons of English brides,  
Who married Englishmen for love.

## SANDY

Oh, now I see Fate's means and ends !  
The Bruce and Wallace wight I ken,  
Who saved old Scotland from its friends,  
Were mighty northern Englishmen.

## BRIAN

And Parnell, who so greatly fought  
Against a wanton useless yoke,  
With Fate inevitably wrought  
That Irish should be English folk.

## BASIL

By bogland, highland, down, and fen,  
All Englishmen, all Englishmen !

## MENZIES

There is no England now, I say—

**BRIAN**

No England now ! My grief, my grief !

**MENZIES**

We lie widespread, the dragon-prey  
Of any Cappadocian thief.  
In Arctic and Pacific seas  
We lounge and loaf : and either pole  
We reach with sprawling colonies—  
Unwieldy limbs that lack a soul.

**BASIL**

St George for Greater England, then !  
The Boreal and the Austral men !  
They reverence the heroic roll  
Of Englishmen who sang and fought :  
They have a soul, a mighty soul,  
The soul of English speech and thought.



SANDY

And when the soul of England slept—

BASIL

St George for foolish England, then !—

SANDY

Lo ! Washington and Lincoln kept

America for Englishmen !

BASIL

Hurrah ! The English people reigns

Across the wide Atlantic flood !

It could not bind itself in chains !

For Yankee blood is English blood.

HERBERT

And here the spring is queen

In robes of white and green.

**PERCY**

In chestnut sconces opening wide  
Tapers shall burn some fresh May morn.

**BRIAN**

And the elder brightens the highway side,  
And the briony binds the thorn.

**SANDY**

White is the snow of the leafless sloe  
The saxifrage by the sedge,  
And white the lady-smocks a-row  
And sauce-alone in the hedge.

**BASIL**

England is in her Spring;  
She only begins to be.  
Oh ! for an organ voice to sing  
The summer I can see !

But the Past is there; and a mole may know,  
And a bat may understand,  
That we are the people wherever we go—  
Kings by sea and land !

HERBERT

And the spring is crowned and stoled  
In purple and in gold.

PERCY

Wherever light, wherever shade is,  
Gold and purple may be seen.

BRIAN

Gold and purple lords-and-ladies  
Tread a measure on the green.

HERBERT

In deserts where the wild wind blows  
Blossoms the magic hæmony.

PERCY

Deep in the Chiltern woodland glows  
The purple pasque anemone.

BASIL

And England still grows great  
And never shall grow old;  
Within our hands we hold  
The world's fate.

MENZIES

We hold the world's fate?  
The cry seems out of date.

BASIL

Not while a single Englishman  
Can work with English brains and bones !

Awaiting us since time began,  
The swamps of ice, the wastes of flame !  
In Boreal and Austral zones  
Took life and meaning when we came.  
The Sphinx that watches by the Nile  
Has seen great empires pass away :  
The mightiest lasted but a while ;  
Yet ours shall not decay.  
Because, although red blood may flow,  
And ocean shake with shot,  
Not England's sword but England's Word  
Undoes the Gordian Knot.  
Bold tongue, stout heart, strong hand, brave  
brow  
The world's four quarters win ;  
And patiently with axe and plough  
We bring the deserts in.

**MENZIES**

Whence comes this patriotic craze?  
Spare us at least the hackneyed brag  
About the famous English flag.

**BASIL**

I'll spare no flourish of its praise.  
Where'er our flag floats in the wind  
Order and justice dawn and shine.  
The dusky myriads of Ind,  
The swarthy tribes far south the line,  
And all who fight with lawless law,  
And all with lawless men who cope  
Look hitherward across the brine,  
For we are the world's forlorn hope.

## MENZIES

That makes my heart leap up ! Hurrah !

We are the world's forlorn hope !

## HERBERT

And with the merry birds we sing

The praises of the English Spring.

## PERCY

Iris and orchis now unfold.

## BRIAN

The drooping-leaved laburnums ope

In thunder-showers of greenish gold.

## MENZIES

And we are the world's forlorn hope !

SANDY

The lilacs shake their dancing plumes  
Of lavender, mauve, and heliotrope.

HERBERT

The speedwell on the highway blooms.

MENZIES

And we are the world's forlorn hope !

SANDY

Skeletons lurk in every street.

HERBERT

We push and strike for air and scope.





BRIAN

The pulses of rebellion beat  
Where want and hunger sulk and mope.

MENZIES

But though we wander far astray,  
And oft in gloomy darkness grope,  
Fearless we face the blackest day,  
For we are the world's forlorn hope.

SANDY

St George for Merry England then !  
For we are all good Englishmen !

BASIL

St George for Greater England then !  
The Boreal and the Austral men !

**ALL**

By bogland, highland, down, and fen,  
All Englishmen, all Englishmen !  
Who with their latest breath shall sing  
Of England and the English Spring !

**THE END**







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